

APPLICATION UNDER UNITED STATES PATENT LAWS

Atty. Dkt.: 2545-0461

Invention: A METHOD FOR MAKING PRODUCT WRAPS, A LEAF FROM WHICH TO FASHION A WRAP OBTAINABLE BY THE METHOD, AND A STRIP FROM WHICH TO OBTAIN THE LEAF

Inventor(s): Eros STIVANI
Stefano CAVALLARI

Harbin King & Klima

500 Ninth Street SE
Washington DC 20003
202-543-6404 Voice
202-543-9230 Fax

This is a:

- ☐ Provisional Application
- ☐ Regular Utility Application
- ☐ Continuing Application
 - ☐ The contents of the parent are incorporated by reference
- ☒ PCT National Phase Application
- ☐ Design Application
- ☐ Reissue Application
- ☐ Plant Application

SPECIFICATION

Description

A method of making product wraps, a leaf from which
to fashion a wrap obtainable by the method, and a
strip from which to obtain the leaf

Technical Field

The present invention relates to a method of making product wraps, also to a leaf used in fashioning a wrap obtainable by the method, and to a strip of material from which single leaves are obtained.

Background Art

5 In particular, the invention finds application to advantage in the art field of packaging, and more specifically of fashioning individual wraps around confectionery products such as chocolates and sweets and the like.

10 The prior art embraces packaging methods whereby wraps of the familiar double twist type are fashioned from leaves of wrapping material, each presenting a substantially rectangular outline. The single leaves are cut transversely from a continuous strip of the
15 selected material.

The product is placed at the centre of the leaf, and the leaf then bent around the product to bring the longitudinal edges together, thus forming a tube, whereupon the two ends of the tube are twisted to
20 produce the characteristic wrap with two wings.

To open a wrap of this kind, the consumer seizes and pulls the two ends, causing the wings to unravel and free the contents.

5 The prior art also includes wraps of which the longitudinal edges and the twisted ends are coated with adhesive material, serving to seal the contents more effectively.

10 More exactly, and as disclosed in PCT publication WO 97/24273, these wraps are obtained by applying two continuous bands of adhesive material to the edges of the continuous strip, extending longitudinally along its entire length. In addition, the strip presents a plurality of bands of the adhesive material extending transversely to the longitudinal dimension and spaced
15 apart one from the next. The strip is cut along each transverse band of adhesive material to generate a plurality of single leaves, each presenting bands of adhesive material around its peripheral outline.

20 The product is then wrapped by joining together the bands of adhesive along the longitudinal edges and twisting the ends in such a way as to pinch the transverse bands of adhesive. Thus, the adhesive bands provide a tighter seal and a firmer closure of the product internally of the wrap.

25 A wrap of this type betrays the notable drawback of being difficult to open in order to consume the product. Formerly, without adhesive, the wrap could be opened by pulling the twisted ends in opposite directions, but with the wings pinched and stuck,
30 they can no longer unravel freely as before.

To overcome this drawback, the joined longitudinal edges of double twist wrapper leaves can be provided with a notch (see EP 816229, for example) serving to facilitate the step of opening the wrap. Pulling from
5 the edges on either side of the notch, the wrap is torn along a line generated by the selfsame notch.

The notch is produced in the assembled wrap by a special device (generally a wheel) that carries each of the single wraps into a position of interaction
10 with a cutter, whereupon the cutter makes an incision in the joined longitudinal edges.

This solution also presents a significant drawback, however, attributable to the excessive bulk of the notching device.

To make a single notch, in effect, the longitudinal edges must be cut when already joined together, and this can be done only by conveying each single wrap into contact with the cutter after it has been closed around the product. Generally speaking, the notching
15 device consists in a wheel carrying a plurality of grippers by which the assembled wraps are taken up and advanced toward the cutter. The wheel takes up considerable space and the process of fashioning the single wraps is made complex and laborious precisely
20 by reason of the need to carry each one toward the notching cutter. Consequently, the cost of producing the single wrap is increased.

Moreover, in the event that the longitudinal edges are not joined neatly together, the cutter can enter
25 into contact with the product and tear parts of the
30

wrap intended specifically to keep the product enclosed.

5 The object of the present invention is to overcome the drawbacks indicated above by adopting a method of making wraps for small items, a leaf from which to fashion the wrap obtainable by such a method, and a relative strip of wrapping material, all as described and illustrated in the present disclosure.

10 In particular, it is an object of the invention to provide a method of making product wraps that will be easy to implement and can be performed without the need for complex and bulky wrapping devices.

15 A further object of the invention is to fashion an easily openable sealed wrap procured initially as a leaf of wrapping material cut from a continuous strip and requiring no additional preparation.

Disclosure of the Invention

20 The stated object is realized according to the present invention in a method of making product wraps comprising the steps of: causing a continuous strip of wrapping material, presenting at least two bands of adhesive extending parallel with its longitudinal dimension, to advance along a predetermined path; cutting the strip transversely along dividing lines to obtain a plurality of leaves each presenting longitudinal edges coinciding with relative dividing lines; associating at least one product with a respective substantially central area of each leaf; 25 folding each leaf around a relative product and

bringing together the two longitudinal edges to form a tubular sheath; closing the ends of the tubular sheath to obtain a wrap, characterized in that it comprises a step, preceding the step of folding each
5 leaf around a relative product, of establishing at least one point between the two adhesive bands and coinciding with the transverse dividing line, from which to initiate an easy tear along a direction substantially transverse to the longitudinal edges of
10 the leaf.

The stated object is realized likewise, according to the present invention, by providing a strip of material from which to fashion product wraps, of the type comprising: a pair of first adhesive bands
15 extending parallel to the longitudinal edges of the strip; also a predetermined number of second adhesive bands extending transversely to the longitudinal dimension of the strip and spaced apart one from the next, wherein the first and second adhesive bands
20 define a plurality of product placement zones each compassed between one second band and the next, characterized in that it comprises at least one notch located to coincide with each second adhesive band.

Lastly, the stated object is realized in a leaf of
25 wrapping material according to the present invention from which to fashion a product wrap, as obtainable in particular by the method according to any one of the appended claims, comprising: a top face presenting a substantially rectangular peripheral
30 outline; a pair of first adhesive bands extending

along the mutually opposed and parallel shorter sides of the peripheral outline presented by the top face; a pair of second adhesive bands extending along the mutually opposed and parallel longer sides of the peripheral outline presented by the top face; a placement zone delimited by the pairs of first and second bands in which to position at least one product; and a first notch located along each second adhesive band and extending parallel to the first adhesive bands, characterized in that it further comprises at least one second notch establishing an indentation located on a respective second adhesive band and presenting the first notch.

The invention will now be described in detail, by way of example, with the aid of the accompanying drawings, in which:

- figure 1 is the plan view of a strip of wrapping material illustrated in a first embodiment according to the present invention;
- figure 1a is the plan view of a strip of wrapping material illustrated in a variation on the first embodiment shown in figure 1;
- figure 2 is the plan view of a strip of wrapping material illustrated in a second embodiment;
- figure 3 is the plan view of a strip of wrapping material illustrated in a third embodiment;
- figure 4 is the perspective view of a product wrap obtained from the strip of figure 3;
- figure 5 is the plan view of a strip of wrapping material illustrated in a fourth embodiment;

-figure 6 is the perspective view of a product wrap obtained from the strip of figure 5;

-figure 7 is the perspective view of a product wrap obtained from the strip of figure 5 and containing,
5 in particular, an item of confectionery.

With reference to the drawings, 1 denotes a wrap, in its entirety, for products 2 of small dimensions, particularly items of confectionery such as toffees, chocolates and the like.

10 Referring in particular to figure 1, the wrap 1 is obtained from a strip 3 of wrapping material caused to advance by means of conventional embodiment (not illustrated) along a predetermined path P and in a predetermined direction D.

15 The strip 3 presents two first adhesive bands 4, extending parallel with the longitudinal dimension of the strip 3 in positions on either side of its longitudinal axis. More exactly, the first bands 4 in question are located near to the two longitudinal
20 edges 3a of the strip 3, and separated from the selfsame edges 3a by a predetermined distance d1 for reasons that will become clear in due course.

The first bands 4 extend continuously along the entire developable length of the strip 3 and will
25 consist of any given material applicable in liquid or solid form and able to produce an adhesive surface, such as one of the cold glues widely used in the packaging sector.

The strip 3 also presents a predetermined number of
30 second adhesive bands 5 extending transversely to the

longitudinal dimension of the strip 3.

More particularly, the second adhesive bands 5 are spaced apart so as to establish a placement zone 6 between one band 5 and the next, in which to position the product 2. In practice, each placement zone 6 interposed between two successive second bands 5 will present a substantially rectangular outline of which the longer sides coincide with the selfsame second bands 5 and the shorter sides coincide with the first adhesive bands 4, thereby creating an adhesive-free zone 6 offered in contact to the product 2.

Each of the second adhesive bands 5 will coincide also with an easy tear point A, at which at least one first notch 7 is made.

The strip 3 is cut crosswise along successive transverse dividing lines 10, each coinciding with a second adhesive band 5 and with the relative easy tear point A, to generate a plurality of leaves 11.

In the example of figure 1, the notch 7 extends along a middle portion of the dividing line 10 and consists in a segment 7a of broken line appearance, in this instance presenting a zigzag profile.

In the example of figure 1a, the segment 7a extends along the full length of the dividing line 10.

In the second embodiment illustrated in figure 2, the first notch 7 is substantially rectilinear and extends parallel to the longitudinal dimension of the strip 3. The notch 7 is produced by a suitably shaped cutter, conventional in embodiment and therefore not described or illustrated further. If the notch were

to be produced with the strip advancing continuously, for example, the cutter could be carried by the peripheral surface of a roller interacting with a reaction roller positioned on the opposite side of the path P from the cutter roller; in this instance
5 the cutter or cutters will be timed or spaced on the revolving surface so as to strike at a predetermined frequency corresponding to the distance separating two successive notches 7 presented by the strip 3.

10 With reference to figures 3 and 4, which illustrate the third embodiment disclosed, this also presents a second notch 8 (produced likewise using a cutter able to interact with the strip 3 in the manner described above), by which the first notch 7 is intersected
15 transversely. The second notch 8 illustrated in figure 3 presents a substantially "U" shaped outline and consists in practice of a central, substantially semicircular segment 9a extending transversely across the first notch 7, and two substantially rectilinear
20 segments 9b merged with the respective ends of the central segment 9a.

The second notch 8 could equally well present a "Vee" or a substantially "W" or "S" shape, and will be positioned in any event to coincide with the
25 dividing line 10.

Each leaf 11 obtained by cutting the strip 3 along the dividing lines 10 will present two longitudinal edges 10a generated by the transverse cut. In other words, the dividing lines 10 extend transversely to
30 the strip 3, while establishing the longitudinal

edges 10a of the single leaf 11.

In more detail, each leaf 11 presents a substantially rectangular face 11a offered in direct contact to the relative product 2, the aforementioned placement area 6 being positioned at the centre of this same face 11a. The single leaf 11 thus appears with the second adhesive bands 5 extending parallel to the edges 10a constituting the longer sides of the leaf 11, and the first adhesive bands 4 extending parallel to the remaining edges denoted 10b which coincide with the shorter sides.

In the examples of figures 1 and 3, the transverse cut made across the continuous strip 3, along the dividing line 10, is interrupted at the easy tear point A so as not to interfere with the first and second notches 7 and 8. In practice, therefore, the transverse cut made along the dividing line 10 consists effectively in two distinct cuts, each extending from a respective rectilinear segment 9b to a corresponding longitudinal edge 3a of the strip 3.

In particular, the second notch 8 is cut in such a manner as to create an indentation 12 in one leaf 11 and a projection 13 on the adjacent leaf 11, the shape of the projection 13 matching the shape of the indentation 12.

Thus, each leaf 11 presents an indentation 12 on one of the two second adhesive bands 5, and a projection 13 on the second adhesive band 5 opposite. It will be seen that, in making the transverse cut across the strip 3, the first notch 7 is divided into

two parts, each constituting a respective part of the projection 13 and of the indentation 12.

5 In the fourth embodiment of the wrap, illustrated in figures 5 and 6, the second notch 8 consists in a hole 14 (pierced by a cutter of circular cross section) superimposed on the first notch 7. In this instance, the transverse cut across the strip 3 can be made along the dividing line 10 in a single stroke, with no need for any break at the easy tear point A.

10 The leaf 11 thus presents two mutually opposed indentations 12, each coinciding with a respective second adhesive band 5 and each also presenting a first notch 7.

15 Significantly, the second notch 8 can be cut together with the first notch 7, either before or simultaneously with the step of cutting the strip 3 transversely. In any event, the indentations 12 and projections 13 are made directly in the continuous strip 3, rather than in the assembled wrap 1.

20 To fashion the wrap 1 illustrated in figure 4, the product 2 is positioned in the placement zone 6 of a corresponding leaf 11 of wrapping material, and the leaf then gathered initially around the product 2 to form a tubular sheath, with the two second adhesive bands 5 joined together. More exactly, the longer sides of the leaf 11 are joined with the respective second adhesive bands 5 offered one to the other along the corresponding edges 10a, with the result

25

30 that the two bands 5 are stuck together. Observing

figure 4, it will be seen that the positions of the projection 13 and the indentation 12 coincide, albeit the two are marginally offset one from the other. This is how the wrap will appear in reality, as a result of the two edges 10a of the leaf 11 shifting one relative to the other when formed into a tube around the product 2.

Likewise in figure 6, which illustrates the fourth embodiment of the wrap, the two indentations 12 are substantially aligned, yet slightly offset one from another.

Once the tubular sheath has been formed, the two open end portions presenting the two first adhesive bands 4 are twisted to form two wings 15, thereby pinching the leaf along the respective bands 4 and sealing the wrap 1 hermetically.

Referring to figure 7, the wrap 1 containing a relative product 2 is opened simply by pulling on the projection 13 or the indentations 12.

More exactly, and referring to the third embodiment of figure 4, the effect of pulling the projection 13 is that the first notch 7 will initiate a tear to separate the two edges of the projection 13. Once the tear has opened along the full length of the projection 13, along a line denoted 16, it will continue into the first notch 7 presented by the indentation 12. At this point, both the edges of the leaf 11 bearing the second adhesive bands 5 will have been torn through and separated, and the wrap 1 can be opened up with notable ease.

In the case of the fourth embodiment, the method of opening the wrap 1 is the same as described above. In this instance the pulling force will be applied first to one of the two indentations 12, then continued
5 until the tear extends through both of the two first notches 7 afforded by the respective indentations 12.

The present invention affords numerous advantages.

Firstly, the method of manufacturing the single wrap 1 is extremely simple and does not call for the use of cumbersome cutting mechanisms, neither for any
10 special handling and conveying of the wrap 1 after being closed. In effect, the first notch 7 of the easy tear feature is applied directly to the strip 3 before fashioning the wrap.

In addition, there is no need for the second
15 adhesive bands 5 to be joined so that the first notches 7 are perfectly matched, given that with the addition of the second notch 8 establishing the indentation 12, a tear can be made through both edges
20 of the wrap 1 without difficulty.

Furthermore, the effect of forming the notches 7 and 8 directly in the strip 3 is to speed up the operation of assembling the wrap 1, since there is no need for any further processing steps once the wrap
25 has been closed, and no requirement for an especially precise alignment between the first notches 7 on each of the second adhesive bands 5.